ORGANIZATION

As you revise your papers, think of organization in terms of blocks of paragraphs working together. There isn't a right or wrong way to organize—but you have to have a reason for ordering paragraphs in a certain way: there needs to be a logic for putting one paragraph before another. This is how writers achieve "flow," or "coherence."

1. Think of your paragraphs as working together in sections or "chunks": the first few paragraphs work together to do one thing, another few paragraphs do something else. Think of your paragraphs as units of ideas which work together: paragraphs don't work independently! (This is how writers achieve "flow," or "coherence").

2. Compare your opening to your ending: how do the two relate? For your introduction, ask these questions: does the introduction set a specific context for a main point? Is the main point clearly established for the reader? For the conclusion, ask these questions: does the conclusion clearly relate to the points of the introduction? Does it needlessly repeat what has already been said, or does it take the same ideas and develop them in a new way?

3. Look at your paper's paragraphs as a whole: what do they LOOK like? Is the introduction longer than any other paragraph? Is the conclusion only one line? Does one paragraph take up more room than any other? If you use a one-sentence paragraph, does this paragraph work dramatically within the whole paper?

4. Try to discover a pattern or principle within your material. Here are suggestions—try to find a pattern that grows out of your paper.

**Organize by time: past, present, future.**
**Organize by beginning with the least important point and moving to the most important point.**
**Organize by establishing a problem, then providing the answer. Or, begin by defining an abstract term and then spend the paper illustrating and explaining the term.**
**Organize by beginning with a concrete illustration or story and then moving towards a more abstract and analytical position or explanation of the illustration/story.**
**Organize by comparison or contrast. This can be done by putting the paper into two halves (comparing two points); or this can be done paragraph by paragraph.**
**Organize by setting a detailed context, then moving to analyze or interpret the context.**
**Organize within paragraphs: putting abstract topic sentences at the beginning of paragraphs and then developing each topic within the paragraph.**